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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 57th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KRENKEL (Austria)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 97: HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS (continued)

(b) HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS, INCLUDING ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES FOR IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS (continued) (A/47/24 and Add.1, A/47/353, 434, 445, 479, 501, 502, 503, 504, 552, 626, 630, 668 and Add.1 and Corr.1, A/47/701 and 702; A/C.3/47/L.18/Rev.1, L.61 and L.65)

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AGENDA ITEM 149: THE SITUATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN ESTONIA AND LATVIA (continued)

1. Mr. ORDZHONIKIDZE (Russian Federation) said that a comprehensive body of international law on the protection of human rights had been established, largely thanks to the efforts of the United Nations, and that the international standards on human rights should be incorporated into the daily work of organs of State power at all levels. Any country that failed to guarantee enjoyment of all human rights to its population could not claim to be truly democratic. It was particularly important for the newly independent States, most of which were experiencing severe social and economic crises, not to ignore human rights issues, since doing so could lead to social upheavals and the emergence of hotbeds of tension.

2. The new democratic State of the Russian Federation was making every effort to raise its own human rights standards to international levels, which necessitated constructive interaction with the outside world. It therefore failed to understand the position of those States which stubbornly refused to cooperate with special rapporteurs and special representatives in the area of human rights. The special rapporteurs' reports before the Committee attested to wide-scale violations of human rights, particularly abhorrent among which were the practice of ethnic cleansing and such persistent phenomena as arbitrary executions, involuntary disappearances and torture. The Russian Federation was concerned by instances in which the results of free and fair elections had been ignored, and it resolutely condemned the persecution of political opponents, however reactionary or revolutionary their views might appear.

3. It was insufficient merely to record and condemn violations of human rights: efforts must be made to predict and prevent such abuses. To that end, comprehensive information on the world situation was needed, indicating the existence of potential flash-points. Optimal use should be made of the experience acquired by the United Nations in the field of human rights, in

(Mr. Ordzhonikidze, Russian Federation)

particular the institution of special rapporteurs and special representatives, whose mandates could be extended to include preventive functions, thereby helping to prevent the recurrence of tragedies like those in Yugoslavia and Nagorny Karabakh.

4. The Russian Federation supported proposals to allocate additional funds to human rights programmes and to strengthen the corresponding units of the Secretariat, primarily the Centre for Human Rights. The necessary funds could be obtained from existing resources by reallocating funds from activities that were no longer relevant, such as those undertaken under the trusteeship system.

5. The forthcoming World Conference on Human Rights should focus on strengthening the existing foundations of international human rights law and the creation of optimal conditions for the full implementation of the rights and freedoms established in international instruments, including a more effective system of monitoring.

6. Mr. AINSO (Estonia), speaking on agenda item 149, said that, prior to the Soviet occupation in 1940, ethnic Estonians had constituted 88.1 per cent of his country's population and the ethnic and cultural rights of minorities, including Russians, had been guaranteed by the 1925 law on the cultural autonomy of ethnic minorities. Over the 50 years of Soviet occupation, 70,000 Estonian citizens had been forcibly deported to remote areas of Siberia, while Russians had been deliberately encouraged to settle in Estonia through economic and other inducements. As a result, the proportion of non-Estonians in Estonia had increased to 38 per cent, thereby changing the ethnic character of the country.

7. Responding to allegations made at the 52nd meeting by the representative of the Russian Federation concerning Estonia's obligations under international human rights instruments, he pointed out that Estonia was not a State party to the Convention concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation or the Employment Policy Convention. As for the allegation that Estonia had breached articles 25 and 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, he observed that article 25 guaranteed the right of a contracting State's own citizens to take part in public affairs. Accordingly, Estonia had held parliamentary and presidential elections in September 1992 which had been deemed free and fair by numerous international observers. While the foreign resident population had not participated in the national elections, such individuals were entitled to participate in local elections if they were registered as permanent residents, a right which very few States accorded to their alien residents. Under Estonia's constitution, all residents, citizens and non-citizens alike, were guaranteed equal treatment.

8. Estonia had also complied with its commitments under article 27 of the Convenant with regard to ethnic minorities. All persons in Estonia, regardless of citizenship, were constitutionally entitled to preserve their ethnic identity and to establish institutions of self-government in accordance

(Mr. Ainso, Estonia)

with the 1925 law on cultural autonomy for ethnic minorities. Under that law, the country's ethnic minorities were entitled to establish educational and cultural institutions using their own languages, and the Estonian constitution guaranteed to all individuals the right to freedom of conscience, religion and thought.

9. In response to the accusation that Estonia had denied 40 per cent of its population the possibility of becoming full-fledged citizens, he pointed out that the reinstated 1938 Citizenship Act provided non-citizen residents with the legal means of acquiring Estonian citizenship, through a system of residence and language-competency requirements. Recognizing the anxiety experienced by the many Russian-speaking people now residing outside the territory of the Russian Federation, Estonia had offered its former Soviet citizens the right to permanent resident status and the option to take citizenship of any State in the Commonwealth of Independent States while maintaining Estonian residence. Citizenship rights were established in the Treaty on Inter-State Relations between Estonia and the Russian Federation, in accordance with the right of every State to regulate its own citizenship procedures. None of the human rights covenants to which Estonia was party required it to grant automatic citizenship to people who had entered the country under the protection of an occupying army.

10. With regard to the accusation that Estonia had not provided a sufficient transition period for language acquisition for the purposes of employment, he noted that the language law had been adopted in January 1989; non-Estonian workers had therefore had nearly four years to acquire the necessary language skills.

11. In response to the criticism expressed by the Russian Federation of the Estonian law prohibiting foreign ownership of land, he pointed out that the Russian Federation had not yet given its own citizens the right to own land and was therefore demanding from Estonia rights it had denied its own people. Similar double standards were applied in education, where Russian-language schooling at all levels was provided to Russian-speaking non-citizens of Estonia, while Estonian communities in Russia enjoyed no such privileges. In general, he hoped that the forthcoming report of the United Nations fact-finding mission to Estonia would put an end to such unwarranted attacks on its sovereignty.

12. As a nation in transition, Estonia was suffering severe social and economic dislocation, with consequent hardships for its population. Recent initiatives had been adopted to save the jobs of non-Estonian workers in the north-east of the country and, in general, to help the country's non-citizen population retain gainful employment.

13. In addition to the planned United Nations fact-finding mission to Estonia, an expert commission had been dispatched by the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) to investigate the state of human

(Mr. Ainso, Estonia)

rights in Estonia, and Sweden had sent a team of observers to study the situation in north-eastern Estonia. He was encouraged by such recent developments as the acknowledgement by the Russian Government of the constructive approach of the Estonian authorities and the decision by the Russian Federation not to insist on automatic citizenship for Estonia's Russian-speaking non-citizens but to accept their naturalization according to generally recognized international norms. In conclusion, he reiterated the assurance given by the Estonian President to the President of the Russian Federation that the human rights of the Russian-speaking population of Estonia would be fully guaranteed.

14. Mr. KASOULIDES (Cyprus) said that the hopes aroused by the dramatic changes in Central and Eastern Europe had been dashed by the upsurge of extreme nationalism and vicious conflicts within the borders of States. Cyprus therefore welcomed the decisive stand taken by the Security Council in addressing local and regional disputes, which had created new optimism for the respect of international principles of human rights and the rule of law.

15. Unfortunately, the systematic and massive violation of human rights in Cyprus by Turkey persisted, notwithstanding Commission on Human Rights decision 1992/106 and previous resolutions on that issue. Long after its invasion of the island, Turkey continued to bar some 200,000 Greek Cypriot refugees from returning to their homes in the occupied area, in flagrant violation of Commission on Human Rights resolution 1987/50 and the European Convention on Human Rights, as the European Commission of Human Rights had concluded in its report on the problem (A/47/527-S/24660, annex).

16. In addition, Turkey was continuing its policy of importing settlers from mainland Turkey, to the detriment not only of Greek but also of Turkish Cypriots, who were compelled to leave Cyprus by increased unemployment and violations of their human rights and basic freedoms. That situation had been verified by the recent fact-finding mission to Cyprus of the Council of Europe Committee on Migration, Refugees and Demography and had prompted the Council to adopt a resolution on that subject (see A/47/536-S/24667).

17. Cyprus welcomed the Secretary-General's proposal for a nationwide census to be conducted in Cyprus by independent international personnel in order to determine the country's total population, the number qualifying as residents under the 1960 treaty establishing the country and the place of origin of all residents not born there.

18. Of the 20,000 Greek Cypriots living in the occupied area in 1974, only a few hundred remained, as a result of harassment, discrimination and oppression by the occupation forces. Since no institutions of higher education were permitted to operate, all young people were forced to move to free Cyprus in order to continue their education. They were not allowed to return to the occupied territory, which resulted in a subtle form of "ethnic cleansing" by creating a homogenous population. The effort to divide the Republic of Cyprus

(Mr. Kasoulides, Cyprus)

permanently extended to the deliberate changing of historic names and toponyms and to the destruction and plundering of the country's rich cultural heritage.

19. While such violations might be viewed as an inevitable result of the invasion, there was no justification for the suffering of the relatives of the 1,619 missing persons, mostly civilians, including many women and children. Despite the adoption of a number of resolutions and the establishment of a Committee on Missing Persons, little information about those individuals had been offered, and the other side must be persuaded to cooperate without regard to political considerations in that purely humanitarian matter.

20. It was encouraging that the Security Council, in its resolution 789 (1992), had reaffirmed all its previous resolutions on the situation, thereby reminding Turkey that all Council resolutions must be implemented and respected. The Secretary-General had made an intensive effort to complete the set of ideas on an overall framework agreement on Cyprus, culminating in face-to-face talks in October 1992. Unfortunately, however, in his report on his mission of good offices in Cyprus (S/24830), he had concluded that the positions of the Turkish Cypriot side were fundamentally at variance with the set of ideas under the headings of the concept of the Federation, displaced persons and territorial adjustments. It was important that, even as the apartheid system was dismantled in South Africa, a similar system should not be institutionalized in Cyprus. His delegation joined the Secretary-General and the Security Council in calling on Turkey to accept the confidence-building measures and to implement Security Council resolution 789 (1992) in good faith as a first step towards restoring respect for the human rights of all the people of Cyprus.

21. Ms. SEMAFUMU (Uganda) said that the United Nations human rights programme should shift its focus from monitoring of the implementation of human rights standards to prevention, capacity-building at the national level and addressing the root causes of human rights violations. In preparation for the forthcoming World Conference on Human Rights, her delegation wished to offer some comments on the shortcomings of that programme which the Conference should address.

22. First, more attention must be paid to the link between development, human rights and democracy. While economic difficulties should not excuse Governments from their responsibility to protect and promote all rights for all citizens, limited resources did indeed undermine the capacity of Governments to ensure the effectiveness of institutions for the promotion of human rights. Furthermore, the violation of the right to food, shelter, primary health care, safe water and sanitation threatened the right to life and the full enjoyment of human rights as surely as torture and enforced disappearance or the denial of freedom of expression.

23. Unfortunately, the developed countries had tended to make respect for civil and political rights a condition for development assistance, which

(Ms. Semafumu, Uganda)

served to promote neither human rights nor development. Paradoxically, the emphasis on political rights and freedoms in the post-cold war era had not been followed to its logical conclusion: the establishment of a just international economic order.

24. Another factor undermining the effectiveness of the United Nations programme was the focus on abuse by Governments of political and civil rights at the expense of preventive action and programmes to enhance the capacity of societies to ensure the protection of their own rights. Technical and financial assistance and training for defence, law-enforcement and criminal justice administration officials would be useful. The United Nations must play a greater role in mobilizing financial resources for human rights programmes without reallocating funds from economic and social programmes. While the ultimate responsibility for the protection of human rights lay with national Governments, all sectors of society had a crucial role to play. Education and public information programmes on human rights standards must be given high priority.

25. Another negative development was the growing tendency for powerful nations to use political and civil rights as a pretext for settling bilateral scores and advancing narrow political interests. Unless the United Nations reversed that unfortunate trend, it risked losing its credibility and moral authority as an impartial organization, and thus the unique opportunity to promote human rights provided by the end of the cold war. As the promotion of human rights took place in a specific political, economic, social and cultural context, any attempt to prescribe solutions while denying cultural diversity would be an exercise in futility.

26. Uganda had continued its efforts to promote human rights as it pursued its development goals. A draft Constitution prepared on the basis of national dialogue would be completed by the end of 1992; following its adoption by an elected constituent assembly, elections would be held in 1994. New structures aimed at making the country's human rights machinery more accessible to the people were being established.

27. The difficulty experienced by the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference on Human Rights in drawing up a consensus agenda was a reflection of differences in perception resulting from different political, economic, social and cultural experiences. Her delegation hoped that, notwithstanding those difficulties, the World Conference would result in a renewed commitment to concrete action for the promotion of human rights of all individuals.

28. Mr. BILOA TANG (Cameroon) stressed the importance of promoting human rights at a time when the world was undergoing far-reaching changes that underscored the need for the full enjoyment of human rights by all individuals. In that context, his Government in recent years had been carrying out profound reforms by establishing a multiparty political system, guaranteeing freedom of the press, setting up a national human rights committee and liberalizing economic life in Cameroon.

(Mr. Biloa Tang, Cameroon)

29. Legislative elections held in March 1992 had made it possible to establish a pluralistic parliament. For the first time in 30 years, his country had held a presidential election with multiple candidates in October 1992. The newly elected President, desiring to promote dialogue and consensus, had formed a Government of national unity, which sought, inter alia, to establish a second chamber of parliament, institute opposition status, set up provincial assemblies and grant extensive autonomy to the regions. All those reforms reflected the choice of the Government and people of Cameroon to establish a democratic system in the country.

30. Mr. MORA GODOY (Cuba) said that he wished to submit a revision to draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.48: paragraph 1 should read "Considers that the various reports submitted on the human rights situation in Cuba show that the use of the procedures envisaged for similar situations of human rights violations in the world should, in this case, be re-examined." His delegation had agreed to that wording in a spirit of flexibility.

31. The accusations made with regard to the so-called "situation of human rights in Cuba" were becoming increasingly aggressive and reflected the political vendetta being waged by the United States of America against Cuba. His delegation wished to demonstrate that that campaign constituted selective interference by the inquisitor and judge - the United States - in the affairs of the supposed sinner - Cuba - and that the campaign was merely a fabrication by the United States having no basis in fact.

32. The United States had an image as the global champion of the cause of human rights; each year, the United States Department of State issued a publication on the status of human rights in other countries, while excluding the United States from such classification, as if the power to make such judgements had been bestowed upon it by a supernatural being or a supranational institution. Yet an analysis of that country's own human rights record showed that United States legislation failed significantly to ensure respect for civil rights and the rights of minorities, failures that were no less serious than those it observed in other countries. Clearly, such a situation merited examination by the international community and the application of United Nations mechanisms for the monitoring of human rights violations. He wondered whether the United States of America would have the courage to invite the Commission on Human Rights to come to its territory or to submit its human rights record to scrutiny, as Cuba had done.

33. Some participants in the campaign against Cuba might bow to Washington's demands in the hope of some type of compensation. While the United States delegation had devoted one or two paragraphs in its recent statement to Cuba, Hungary had devoted five paragraphs, thereby demonstrating that it was even more interventionist than the United States.

34. A central part of the campaign against Cuba involved the alleged non-governmental organizations on which the report of the Special Rapporteur

(Mr. Mora Godoy, Cuba)

(A/47/625) and the draft resolution against Cuba were based. He had evidence proving that United States Government funds and resources had been used to finance the activities of the non-governmental organizations interviewed by the Special Rapporteur. The National Endowment for Democracy had been established in 1983 by the United States Congress, and, although registered as a non-governmental, non-profit organization, its purpose was to finance organizations throughout the world from the United States budget in pursuit of the United States Government's political objectives in other countries. The Cuban Committee for Human Rights was just one of the organizations that had received funding from that organization in order to disseminate literature in Cuba on human rights activities.

35. The efforts of the United States Government to manipulate the human rights issue against Cuba had originated in the White House and State Department, and had not been based on the unbiased work of any human rights organization. The work of the Special Rapporteur was part and parcel of the United States campaign against Cuba, which could only be characterized as a pack of lies.

36. Mr. VASSILAKIS (Greece), while welcoming the statement by the representative of the United Kingdom on behalf of the European Community, expressed disappointment that Greece had once again found it necessary to address the issue of human rights in Cyprus. The continuing refusal of Turkey to implement General Assembly and Security Council resolutions on Cyprus was a stark exception to the broader trend towards freedom and democracy in the world. As a result of Turkey's policies, 40 per cent of the territory of Cyprus remained under occupation, and gross and massive violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms persisted. For example, the freedom of individuals to move, settle and acquire property was still denied to both Greek and Turkish Cypriots in Turkish-occupied areas, and Greek Cypriots who had been forced to flee the northern part of Cyprus in the wake of the 1974 invasion continued to be deprived of their homes and property. The European Commission of Human Rights had also concluded that Turkey was in violation of the European Convention on Human Rights.

37. Of particular concern to Greece was the effort to alter the demographic structure of the island of Cyprus, particularly in the occupied areas, by transferring Greek Cypriots from the northern part of the island to the south and tranferring large numbers of settlers into the occupied area. The situation in Cyprus had forced thousands of Turkish Cypriots to immigrate in order to avoid the oppression of Turkish settlers and troops. Such practices were in violation of article 49 of the fourth Geneva Convention and had been the subject of a resolution adopted recently by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

38. The treatment of Greek Cypriots in the occupied area of the island constituted another major human rights violation. As demonstrated by the report of the Secretary-General to the Commission on Human Rights

(Mr. Vassilakis, Greece)

(E/CN.4/1992/25), those people were subject to oppression, discrimination and harassment by the occupation army, as well as violent acts such as robbery, theft and assault.

39. The situation regarding missing persons was yet another shameful violation of human rights. Despite the adoption of a number of United Nations resolutions and the establishment, in 1981, of a committee to collect information on missing persons, the Turkish authorities had been unwilling to cooperate in practical terms. The status of missing persons had also been a source of concern to the European Commission of Human Rights, which had noted, inter alia, that there were sufficient indications that Greek Cypriots who were still missing had been unlawfully deprived of their liberty and that Turkey had failed to account for their fate, in violation of the European Convention on Human Rights (A/47/204-S/23887). The systematic plundering of the cultural heritage of the occupied Cypriot territory should also be noted.

40. In his report to the Security Council dated 19 November 1992 (S/24830), the Secretary-General had noted that the exceptions asserted by Turkey to the principle of the right to return and the right to property in effect precluded the possibility that displaced Greek Cypriots would be able to return to their homes. Security Council resolution 789 (1992) had also reaffirmed the unacceptability of the status quo and had called upon the Turkish Cypriot side to adopt positions that were consistent with the set of ideas. The Greek Government welcomed the opportunity to cooperate with the Secretary-General in his mission of good offices so that resolution 789 (1992) and other resolutions on the question of Cyprus could be implemented.

41. Turning to other human rights questions before the Committee, he noted that the Centre for Human Rights was facing a critical situation as a result of a dramatic increase in its workload and the reduction of resources available to it. He therefore welcomed the adoption of the draft resolution calling for the Centre's strengthening. The 1993 World Conference on Human Rights should also give new impetus to the protection and promotion of human rights throughout the world, particularly through its emphasis on the prevention of human rights abuses.

Statements in exercise of the right of reply

42. Mr. ALI (Bangladesh), referring to the statement by the representative of the United Kingdom on behalf of the States members of the European Community concerning the situation in the hill tracts in Bangladesh, said that successive Governments in Bangladesh had attached the highest priority to the people of the hill tracts. The States members of the European Community were well aware of the positive steps taken in Bangladesh to uphold the civil and political liberties and socio-economic rights of all the people of the area.

43. The European Community must also be aware of the continued armed insurgency being waged by the so-called Shanti Bahini, who sought to

(Mr. Ali, Bangladesh)

destabilize the political situation in the area. While Bangladesh remained fully committed to maintaining peace in the three hill tracts and protecting the ethnic identity of tribal people living there, the insurgency had impeded the Government's efforts to maintain harmony and promote social and economic development.

44. He drew attention to an incident which had taken place at Logang in April 1992, killing members of both the tribal and non-tribal populations. A judicial commission established to investigate the incident had made it clear that the incident was the direct result of a premeditated plan by Shanti Bahini terrorists to undermine the Government's efforts to promote peace and harmony. The European Community had in fact welcomed the recent publication of the commission's findings.

45. He wished to assure the Committee of his Government's total commitment to the welfare of the people of the hill districts. A Committee on Chittagong Hill Tracts had been formed to resolve the problems in those districts, and its recent fact-finding mission and meeting with the Shanti Bahini political umbrella organization reflected his Government's clear commitment to sincere and genuine political dialogue.

46. Mr. KUBBA (Iraq) said that the statements by the representatives of Australia, Canada and New Zealand reflected the desire of those countries to consolidate control over the entire northern part of Iraq. The statement by Australia had levelled new accusations of violations of the aerial exclusion zone. Those remarks reflected an ignorance of the demographic characteristics of the area; before the Committee made allegations of human rights violations, it needed precise data to support its claims. Moreover, it was disappointing that speakers had not addressed the suffering of the Iraqi people that had been caused by the occupation of Iraqi territory in the wake of the war in the Persian Gulf.

47. Mrs. AOKI (Japan) said that the Government of Japan had expressed its sincere apologies and remorse to all, irrespective of nationality or origin, who had endured pain and suffering as a result of their status as so-called "comfort women" during the Second World War. The Japanese Government had addressed that question, including the issue of compensation, in accordance with multilateral and bilateral peace treaties as well as other relevant treaties with the countries concerned. In the case of the country from which the "comfort women" had come, the claims were being discussed in the context of the bilateral normalization talks currently under way. Japan was fully aware that various views on the question of "comfort women" were again being expressed by the parties concerned, both governmental and non-governmental, inside and outside Japan. The Japanese Government was seriously considering how best to convey its feelings of compassion to those who had long suffered.

48. However, another issue that should be of interest to the country concerned had to do with Japanese women living in that country as wives of Koreans. At least 1,800 Japanese wives had gone to that country with their

(Mrs. Aoki, Japan)

Korean husbands around 1960; none of them had ever been allowed to return to their native country to meet family members or close relatives. The refusal to allow the wives to visit Japan constituted a breach of the relevant international humanitarian norms and was a source of great concern to the Japanese people. Consequently, her Government strongly urged the Government of the country concerned to respond on a humanitarian basis to Japan's sincere request and resolve the problem of expatriate wives.

49. Mr. MOTOC (Romania) expressed his delegation's complete disagreement and dissatisfaction with the allegations made in the statement by the Hungarian representative at the Committee's 55th meeting. It was clear that those allegations were wholly consistent with the position taken by Hungary at the forty-eighth session of the Commission on Human Rights, when it had been the only State to disagree with the Commission's general assessment that the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on Romania should not be renewed.

50. Hungary's position stood in bold contrast to the Romanian Government's positive attitude and close cooperation with the Commission on Human Rights, as emphasized in the Commission's resolution 1992/64. Romania was in fact deeply concerned at the rising wave of xenophobic and anti-Semitic activity in Hungary, and was therefore surprised that Hungary wished to teach lessons in democracy instead of preventing and eliminating the aforesaid phenomena.

51. For its part, Romania had opted for the rule of law and a democratic society that fully respected international human rights standards, which allowed it to promote and uphold fundamental human rights and freedoms. His Government's concern for human rights had been reflected in the new democratic constitution, which also included a provision stating that international human rights instruments would take precedence over domestic laws. Additional evidence of Romania's commitments to human rights lay in the country's membership in the Commission on Human Rights and the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities.

52. Mr. Jong Moo CHOI (Republic of Korea) recalled that his delegation had already stated its position on the "comfort women" issue at the forty-eighth session of the Commission on Human Rights and the forty-fourth session of the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities. Since 1991, the Government of the Republic of Korea had been urging the Government of Japan to bring to light all the facts relating to that issue and to take appropriate measures. In July 1992, the Japanese Government had acknowledged its involvement in the "comfort women" affair. The Government of the Republic of Korea had collected the relevant materials and had filed statements from the victims proving that coercion had been employed in the course of their recruitment. Building upon progress already made, discussions between the Government of the Republic of Korea and Japan were currently under way. His delegation hoped that the Japanese Government would expedite its fact-finding efforts and conscientiously pursue follow-up measures in order to resolve the "comfort women" issue as soon as possible.

53. Mr. ZHANG Yishan (China) said that at the previous meeting the representative of Canada had viciously attacked China, in addition to a large number of other countries, apparently in the belief that the safeguarding of human rights meant accusing others. The Canadian delegation must think that the more countries it accused, the greater a champion it was of human rights. The full enjoyment of human rights had long been a noble goal pursued by mankind and the international community. Every year, the Committee considered the matter of human rights, and many countries made very useful comments contributing to the further protection and promotion of human rights. However, the practice of reducing that exercise to the level of making wilful accusations against other countries, as the representative of Canada had done, could by no means be considered safeguarding or promoting human rights.

54. Such an approach only poisoned the atmosphere of international cooperation, led to confrontation between North and South and politicized the question of human rights. The representative of Canada should abandon that practice and participate in genuine international cooperation for the promotion of human rights, rather than compete for first place in name-calling. That representative, naturally, carefully avoided levelling irresponsible accusations against the countries of the region to which Canada belonged, because they enjoyed immunity in that regard. Many countries, including China, had refrained from making accusations, not because there were no human rights problems in the region of which Canada was a part, but because they strongly believed that safeguarding of human rights was the joint responsibility of the international community and required cooperation, reconciliation, harmony and mutual respect and understanding.

55. Mr. RAHMAN (Pakistan) said that the statement by Canada reflected misconceptions and a lack of knowledge about recent events in Pakistan. In fact, the Pakistani Army had been called out in support of civil authorities only to restore order, an effort supported by all parties, including the opposition. In addition, Canada had been misinformed about certain details of the identification card programme Pakistan was considering: national identity cards had not yet been introduced, and the inclusion of "religion" as a category of data on the card was not directed at minorities. As to allegations concerning expedited judicial procedures, appeals courts would be able to review decisions made under those procedures. In addition, Pakistan had taken measures to guarantee the rights of individuals detained under the new regulations - for example, women were no longer being detained overnight.

56. By way of conclusion, he noted that Canada was not itself immune to human rights problems, as the situation of the Mohawks and other indigenous peoples demonstrated.

57. Mr. BURCUOGLU (Turkey) said that for the past four years the Greek delegation had always been the last to speak at the last meeting dealing with the question of human rights and had attacked only one country: Turkey. That demonstrated perseverence, or an obsession, or even a lack of imagination. Nevertheless, Greece was a sovereign State and had the right to choose the

(Mr. Burcuoglu, Turkey)

time and place to take the floor. In previous years the Turkish delegation had exercised its right of reply to refute the statements made by the representative of Greece. At the current session, however, rather than enter into a political discussion in the Committee, which was not the most suitable forum for doing so, his delegation, at the risk of surprising the Greek delegation, would refrain from entering the same debate.

58. Mr. HYON Hak Bong (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said it was a well-known fact that the Japanese authorities had long denied Japan's direct involvement in the despicable and horrifying forced recruitment of "comfort women" during the Second World War until evidence had been discovered in the Japanese national archives and other sources proving the involvement of the Japanese Government and military. Although the Japanese Government had recently expressed remorse for what had happened, it continued to evade responsibility for the crimes committed. Japan had failed to conduct an overall investigation into the matter and was unwilling even to state clearly the number of victims or the full extent of the human rights violations perpetrated by the Japanese authorities.

59. At the beginning of the bilateral talks aimed at normalizing relations between the two countries, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had raised the question and demanded a clear apology. Japan, however, had failed to make such an apology. Japan should demonstrate a sincere approach in the matter by conducting a thorough investigation, making the results public and pledging never to repeat that practice.

60. With regard to the issue just raised by the representative of Japan, the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was making every possible effort to resolve humanitarian issues such as visits to Japan by the Japanese wives of Koreans. All the humanitarian issues should be resolved together, and Japan should halt its hostile campaign against his country and promote that process.

61. Mr. VASSILAKIS (Greece) expressed appreciation to the representative of Turkey for at least recognizing the right of all Member States to take the floor whenever they deemed it appropriate. Turkey's human rights policy was based on a double standard: in one place it condemned ethnic cleansing, while in another it applied that practice. The Government of Turkey should read the report of the Secretary-General on his mission of good offices in Cyprus (S/24830) and comply with Security Council resolution 789 (1992). If that was done, the Greek delegation would not have to take the floor again on that question at the next session of the General Assembly.

62. Mr. KASOULIDES (Cyprus) said that everyone was aware that Turkey was actively involved in efforts to adopt strict measures in the case of the former Yugoslavia and promoting itself as a fierce protector of human rights in other countries far from home. However, if Turkey really wanted to improve its image, it should demonstrate its good faith by implementing the Security

(Mr. Kasoulides, Cyprus)

Council resolutions on the question of Cyprus. In that connection, he once again called upon Turkey to act positively in the forthcoming round of negotiations and settle the Cyprus problem once and for all.

63. Mr. TROTTIER (Canada) recalled that in his statement at the preceding meeting he had indicated that human rights violations occurred in all regions of the world, including the Western States, and that, on occasion, situations had arisen in Canada leading to violations of the rights of individuals, including indigenous persons. What set Canada apart from some other countries was that human rights violations were not systemic to its form of governance and were not sustained. In every part of Canada and at every level of Government, there existed institutions through which individuals could seek redress for such violations. A free press, an active community of non-governmental organizations and an interested public ensured that Parliament took action on any institutional shortcomings through public inquiry. In the specific case of indigenous people, they enjoyed all the rights exercised by all Canadians; moreover, the Constitution guaranteed them additional rights, such as treaty and aboriginal rights.

Draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.18/Rev.1

64. The CHAIRMAN said that Angola, Belize, Bhutan, Brazil, Jordan, Lebanon, the Sudan and Swaziland had joined the sponsors of the draft resolution.

65. Draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.18/Rev.1 was adopted.

66. Mr. JOSHI (Nepal) said his delegation was pleased that draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.18/Rev.1 had been adopted by consensus. Nepal was committed to promoting universal standards for the protection of human rights and attached the highest importance to the forthcoming World Conference. Accordingly, he hoped that the consensus achieved by the Committee would ensure the success of that undertaking.

Draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.61

67. The CHAIRMAN said that the Sudan had joined the sponsors of the draft resolution.

68. Mr. RAVEN (United Kingdom), speaking on behalf of the European Community in explanation of vote before the voting, said that the States members of the Community would vote against the draft resolution, as they had done the previous year with regard to a similar draft resolution, to express their concern about the practice of selectively citing principles set forth in the Charter and their serious doubts about the appropriateness of considering a controversial draft under an item traditionally handled in a spirit of cooperation. The draft resolution did not add any constructive elements to the efforts by many delegations to enhance the effectiveness of the principle of periodic and genuine elections. Nevertheless, it should remain perfectly

(Mr. Raven, United Kingdom)

clear that the European Community was fully committed to the principles of the Charter mentioned in the draft resolution. Its member States, however, objected to any use of the Charter to justify the denial of the right to free and democratic elections. As in all cases relating to the promotion and protection of human rights by the United Nations, those principles should be considered in conjunction with Articles 55 and 56 of the Charter.

69. A recorded vote was taken on draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.61.

In favour: Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, China, Colombia, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Paraguay, Peru, Qatar, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against: Albania, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Abstaining: Belarus, Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Honduras, Jamaica, Philippines, Samoa, Togo.

70. Draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.61 was adopted by 82 votes to 43, with 14 abstentions.

71. Mr. NIETO (Argentina), speaking in explanation of vote, said that he had voted against the draft resolution because it emphasized the confrontational aspects of electoral assistance instead of promoting that institution. Since

(Mr. Nieto, Argentina)

United Nations electoral assistance was initiated at the request of a State desiring such assistance, there was no need to reaffirm the principles of national sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of States, which, in any case, were duly set forth in the Charter.

Draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.65

72. The CHAIRMAN said that Bolivia, Cameroon, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Nigeria, the Philippines, Samoa, Senegal and Uganda had joined the sponsors of the draft resolution.

73. Draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.65 was adopted.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.